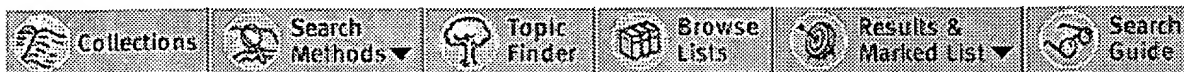


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DON'T GET HOT AND BOTHERED ABOUT BUYING AC GO TO AN AIR-CONDITIONING SHOWROOM ARMED WITH SPECIFIC INFORMATION THAT WILL AFFECT YOUR COOLING NEEDS

Chicago Tribune (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Chicago, Ill.; Jul 15, 1996; Jeffrey Steele. Special to the Tribune.

Sub Title: [NORTH SPORTS FINAL, C Edition]

Column Name: Smart Shopping.

Start Page: 5

ISSN: 10856706

Abstract:

As long hot summers go, the current version has proved no match for the sauna that was summer 1995. Still, if you're without air conditioning, or if your older window or through-the-wall unit is sputtering, you're probably ready to part with some cold cash for a bit of cool comfort.

*Visit home centers, and you'll find low prices on window or "sleeve" model **air conditioners**, but not a lot of personal service. A better bet, say air-conditioning **experts**, is to chill out at stores specializing in **air conditioners** or major appliances.*

*In general, however, it's possible to match **Btu** (British thermal units) to different size air conditioning needs. Are you cooling a typical small bedroom? A 5,000-**Btu** air conditioner will probably do the trick, said Gary Mazur, store manager with Southwest Appliance in Lombard. A 10,000- to 12,000-**Btu** model is adequate to cool a standard two- to three-room apartment, while a 23,000-**Btu** model can cool off four or five rooms, he said.*

Full Text:

Copyright Chicago Tribune Co. Jul 15, 1996

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Visit home centers, and you'll find low prices on window or "sleeve" model air conditioners, but not a lot of personal service. A better bet, say air-conditioning experts, is to chill out at stores specializing in air conditioners or major appliances.

At this type of store, you won't have to guess what type of air conditioner is appropriate for your home. That's because trained personnel are there to guide you to units of the proper size and with the right features for your cooling needs.

Sizing is important

Before you enter air-conditioning showrooms, however, do a little homework, said Rube Seltzer, general manager

of North Shore Refrigeration in Palatine.

"Bring in the measurements of the room, and bring in the measurements of the opening," he advised. "Sizing is very important. If you have the right size air conditioner, it will take care of the room, whether it's 80 degrees or 100 degrees."

For an even closer match to your needs, come armed with more information than room size and the dimensions of the opening, added Michael Krokidas, owner of Suburban Electric in Homewood.

"You can't go just by the square footage of the room," he said. "If you have a room on the south wall, or a room often occupied by several people, or a room that includes a refrigerator or other large equipment, you're going to need a larger air conditioner."

Wide picture windows or sliding glass patio doors with little to shade them from the sun are two more home features that affect the decision. Both can mean the need for an air conditioner with significantly more cooling capacity, said Krokidas.

In general, however, it's possible to match Btu (British thermal units) to different size air conditioning needs. Are you cooling a typical small bedroom? A 5,000-Btu air conditioner will probably do the trick, said Gary Mazur, store manager with Southwest Appliance in Lombard. A 10,000- to 12,000-Btu model is adequate to cool a standard two- to three-room apartment, while a 23,000-Btu model can cool off four or five rooms, he said.

The price you pay, though, depends on more than Btu. Efficiency and quietness will both cost you more, as will convenience features. But some of the newer conveniences are well worth the cost, said Krokidas.

"One of the nicer ones is the sliding chassis, which allows you to slide the guts of the air conditioner out for cleaning, without taking the whole unit out," he said.



"Slide-out filters are also nice. They allow you to change filters without having to remove the grill of the air conditioner."

Prices begin in the low \$200s for 4,000- to 5,000-Btu window units, and can reach \$1,000 or more for units in the 30,000-Btu range. Most units capable of cooling an average-size living room fall in the \$400 to \$500 price range.


Suburban Electric is a 40-year-old Homewood store selling  General Electric and Janitrol air conditioners from 4,000 to 24,000 Btu. The store also services air conditioners, sells parts and offers extended warranties beyond those offered by manufacturers.

Service is the reason the shop has survived so long, said Krokidas. "We do warranty work for manufacturers, and they monitor our work," he said. "Those manufacturers check back with customers, and in the reports they put together we routinely score 90 to 95 percent in customer satisfaction."

An extended warranty


One of the best-known stores for air conditioners is Morton Grove's Abt Electronics and Appliances. The store, open since 1936, sells window, sleeve and casement units ranging from 5,000 to 32,000 Btu, with names such as  GE, Amana,  Fedders, Panasonic and Frigidaire. Abt services air conditioners, sells parts and offers up to a five-year warranty that extends most manufacturers' one-year warranties.



"All our delivery is free, we service every product we sell, and we stand behind all our products," said store vice president Billy Abt. "If you have a problem, you can deal directly with Abt."

At 30-year-old Southwest Appliance in Lombard,  GE and White-Westinghouse models are offered, ranging from 5,200 to 23,500 Btu. The store sells both window and through-the-wall units, but does not service or offer longer warranties on air conditioners.

"We know what people need," said store manager Mazur. "If customers tell us the measurement of the sleeve and the size of the room, we can tell them what size air conditioner they should have."


North Shore Refrigeration is a 67-year-old company offering a complete selection of window and wall units from 5,000 Btu on up.







Amana,  Fedders, Carrier, Emerson and White-Westinghouse are a few of the brand-names sold by the store, which services air conditioners and offers extended warranties. Selling points are personal service and informed salespeople, said general manager Seltzer.

In Chicago, Temson Radio and Appliance carries  Fedders, Emerson, Panasonic,  GE and other brands, in sizes from 5,000 to 32,000 Btu. The North Side store, open since 1945, doesn't service air conditioners or carry parts, but does provide extended warranties.

"We take time to talk with the customer," said owner Howard Karmin. "We're just a small, family-owned business, and we ask about room size, window width, voltage and amperage."

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GET COOKIN' IT'S TIME TO PUT 'COOL' ON THE FRONT BURNER

Chicago Tribune (Pre-1997 Fulltext); Chicago, Ill.; May 26, 1995; Betty Lonngren. Special to the Tribune.;

Sub Title: [NORTH SPORTS FINAL, C Edition]

Column Name: Apartments. Where to look. What to rent. How to bargain.

Start Page: 22

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Abstract:

*The most effective alternative, of course, is a window **air conditioner** and that's the route a number of tenants take each summer. Cooling **experts** warn that a single window unit is seldom sufficient to cool an entire apartment. On the other hand, a single installation can efficiently convert a steamy bedroom into more tolerable sleeping quarters. If you're fed up with flipping and flopping through a long series of sultry, sleepless summer nights, that function alone is reason enough to consider investing in a **window air conditioner**.*

First, however, check with your landlord to see whether window units are permitted in your apartment and where they can be installed. He may be able to offer helpful hints on the installation. On the other hand, he may not allow the units because of their electrical demands, the window construction or noise considerations.

*"**BTUs** are the accepted way of measuring cooling capacity," she explains. "Low-end window units are about 5,000 **BTUs** and cost about \$250; high-end, around 18,000 (**BTUs**), run to about \$550," which is just about all the consumer needs to know about **BTUs**, according to [Fran] Scott.*

Full Text:

Copyright Chicago Tribune Co. May 26, 1995

When temperatures hit 100 in the shade and the humidity approximates that of a health club sauna, even the most ardent lover of sun and fun tends to become stressed out and cranky.

If you're living in an apartment building with central air, it's easier to kick back and chill out. Unfortunately, such buildings are still in the minority, so many renters must look for an alternative way to keep their cool through the dog days.

The most effective alternative, of course, is a window air conditioner and that's the route a number of tenants take each summer. Cooling experts warn that a single window unit is seldom sufficient to cool an entire apartment. On the other hand, a single installation can efficiently convert a steamy bedroom into more tolerable sleeping quarters. If you're fed up with flipping and flopping through a long series of sultry, sleepless summer nights, that function alone is reason enough to consider investing in a window air conditioner.

First, however, check with your landlord to see whether window units are permitted in your apartment and where they can be installed. He may be able to offer helpful hints on the installation. On the other hand, he may not allow the units because of their electrical demands, the window construction or noise considerations.

Buying a window air conditioner is certainly not as easy as selecting a new couch or choosing a suitable mattress. You don't just walk into a store and select the first model you see that matches the draperies

Shop early

For starters, it's best to start shopping as early in the season as possible. If you wait until you can fry an egg on the sidewalk (and that may not be long from now), you'll probably have to pay more, you'll definitely have to wait longer for a salesperson, delivery and installation, and your choices may be limited.

In the store, you'll find dozens of window units of various sizes and shapes, all labeled prominently with a variety of technical information, including BTU ratings. Many people find BTUs off-putting. The acronym stands for British thermal units and it isn't all that complicated, according to Fran Scott, sales manager for North Town Refrigeration Corp. in Chicago.

"BTUs are the accepted way of measuring cooling capacity," she explains. "Low-end window units are about 5,000 BTUs and cost about \$250; high-end, around 18,000 (BTUs), run to about \$550," which is just about all the consumer needs to know about BTUs, according to Scott.

She says that, before she can make a sale, she needs the answer to several very important questions, after which she can steer you to an appropriate model-BTUs and all. "Before I can suggest a specific window air conditioner, I need to know what kind of window it will go into," she says, "what size of room it will be cooling and what side of the building it will be located on."

"I also need to know whether you're on the top floor, with sun beating down on a tar roof, or a lower floor where you are more protected from direct heat."

Window style is important because the units are designed for specific window styles and if the conditioner doesn't fit properly it will vibrate and make you crazy.

North is best

Scott says you should locate your conditioner on a north window, if possible, where it will be exposed to the least direct sunlight. The worst side is a west window, unless it's shaded by something like an awning, a tree or shrubbery.

Scott notes that you really shouldn't expect a window unit to cool an entire apartment. There's no way you can do that and avoid having the room in which the unit is located cold enough to make ice cubes.

"A window unit can cool a couple of rooms, a bit more if you use ceiling fans to circulate the air," she says.

Scott believes it's better to buy an undersized unit, rather than one that is oversized, and she believes that two smaller units are preferable to a single larger one.

"An oversized unit won't cycle on often enough to dehumidify properly," she explains, "and small units are less apt to blow fuses or trip circuit breakers."

After you've chosen a suitable unit, the store will frequently arrange to have it delivered and installed for you. If you've shopped at a discount outlet, or if you're desperate for immediate heat relief, you'll take your new air conditioner home with you and install it yourself. It isn't too difficult, because most units have side panels that adjust to fit the size and style of window for which the unit was designed. Just be sure it fits snugly and that the window itself is secure in its frame; otherwise it will vibrate. The unit should be pitched away from window walls, so the moisture can drip outside, rather than seep into the building.

The thermostatic control on your new air conditioner will not be temperature specific. Instead it will probably be marked from "Low" to "High" or numerically, from 1 to 9, and a midrange setting is best for most people, according to Scott, though it's actually a matter of preference and you'll have to experiment to determine what setting suits you.

Air conditioners suck up a lot of electricity. If you're away throughout the day and don't mind waiting half an hour or so for your space to cool off after you come home, you can save on your electric bill by turning the air conditioning off, or to a very low setting, while you're away. You may also choose to run your unit only when the indoor temperature becomes intolerable.

Little maintenance

Scott says that window air conditioners require very little maintenance.

"Filters are washable and should be rinsed out whenever they get dirty," she says. "It's usually once every two or three weeks during the cooling season."

Other than that, an air conditioner is a very undemanding appliance, though Scott does recommend that you have have your unit cleaned professionally every two or three years.

Despite the fact that air conditioners are the most efficient way to cool down the indoor environment, a lot of people just don't like them. Scott notes that older people, in particular, are often uncomfortable with air conditioning. For such people, she suggests a dehumidifier.

"If a dehumidifier is run in conjunction with fans to circulate the air, it can make an apartment a lot more comfortable," she says.

Since they were rediscovered a couple of decades ago, ceiling fans have become the summer's second most popular cooling device.

Betty Kundrick of A-Abart Electrical Supply Co. in Chicago, which sells and services fans, says that ceiling fans work most effectively if there is one in each room to keep the air circulating throughout the space.

Fan-tastic

Before you shop for one, she says, you should have the measurement of the rooms where they are to be installed, including the ceiling height.

"Most fans are designed for conventional 8-foot ceilings," she explains. "If you have a cathedral or loft ceiling, you need fans with longer poles because the further from the ceiling, the more circulation the fan provides."

She points out that hugger styles (which fit close to the ceiling, with very short poles) are inappropriate for high ceilings and are best used only if your ceiling is so low a conventional unit might scramble your brain.

Fans range in size from 29 inches in diameter, for entryways and bathrooms, to 56 inches for very large rooms with high ceilings. In the summer they should be rotating to blow the cool air down on you. In the winter you can reverse them to circulate warm air without unpleasant drafts.

The popularity of air conditioning and ceiling fans has reduced the market for window fans to the point where good ones are pretty hard to find these days, according to Kundrick. She doesn't approve of the inexpensive models with the plastic casings, which sit on the window sill rather than install into the frame. "Many of those window fans are cheaply constructed," she says. "They have small, ineffective motors and plastic blades, and they're usually a waste of money."

She says that a good window fan should have metal blades, a heavy-duty motor and multiple speed settings, including reverse. While they aren't that easy to find these days, Kundrick believes it always pays to shop around and pay the extra cost to get a substantial fan, which will last indefinitely and provide adequate circulation.

The primary function of a window fan is to pull hot air out of your space and replace it with cooler air from outside, she notes.

"If you've come home after the house has been shut up all day, the space may be very hot and stuffy," she says, "you open a window opposite the fan and reverse the fan to suck the hot air out and, at the same time, draw cooler air in through the opposite window."

Large pedestal fans, though used primarily in industrial and commercial settings, also come in residential models, Kunderick says, and are sold by A-Abart.

Even the smaller, oscillating fans, which sit on the floor or a table, can cool you off appreciably, particularly if you use more than one and place them strategically to keep the air moving. A single oscillating fan is most effective if it is aimed directly at your bed or your favorite TV watching perch. Kunderick suggests that you shop for small fans with the same qualities as the larger models-blades made of metal rather than plastic; adequate motors; and multiple speed settings.

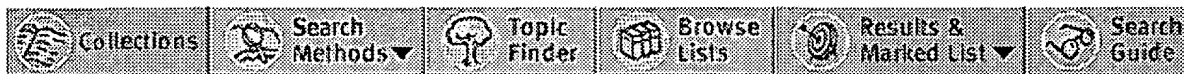
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Air-conditioner alphabet soup

Dallas Morning News; Dallas, Tex.; Jun 30, 1995; [Ken Sheinkopf](#);

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Abstract:

A: The SEER number, which is the standard rating for **air conditioners**, stands for the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio. The SEER is based on the cooling accomplished in British thermal units of energy divided by the electricity consumed in kilowatts. A **Btu** is the amount of heat required to increase the temperature of 1 pound of water 1 degree. A kilowatt is a unit of power equal to 1,000 watts.

A higher SEER number means that the unit is more efficient. In 1992 the National Appliance Efficiency Standard in the country set a minimum SEER of 10.0 for central air-conditioning systems. Note that a unit rated at 12, which is the minimum many **experts** recommend for homes in hot climates, is 20 percent more efficient than one rated at 10.